United Nations A/67/PV.92

General Assembly
Sixty-seventh session

Official Records

92nd plenary meeting
Wednesday, 24 July 2013, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Jeremić ..... (Serbia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Salam (Lebanon), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

Agenda item 6 (*continued*)

Election of the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly

Election of one Vice-President of the General Assembly for the sixty-eighth session

The Acting President: The Assembly will now resume its consideration of agenda item 6 to proceed to the election of one Vice-President of the General Assembly for the sixty-eighth session, in accordance with rule 30 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

Members will recall that, at its 88th plenary meeting, on 14 June 2013, the Assembly elected 21 Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly for the sixty-eighth session.

In a letter dated 8 July 2013, I have been informed by the Chair of the Asia-Pacific Group that the Asia-Pacific States have endorsed Timor-Leste to fill the vacancy following the resignation of Uzbekistan as a Vice-President of the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session.

In accordance with paragraph 16 of decision 34/401, the election of the Vice-Presidents of the Assembly by secret ballot will be dispensed with when the number of candidates corresponds to the number of seats to be filled. We shall proceed accordingly.

Since there is only one candidate for the one seat to be filled by the Asia-Pacific States, I declare Timor-Leste elected Vice-President of the Assembly at its sixty-eighth session. I congratulate Timor-Leste on its election.

I wish to remind members that, following the election of the Chairpersons of the six Main Committees, at a later date, the General Committee of the General Assembly for the sixty-eighth session will then be fully constituted in accordance with rule 38 of the rules of procedure.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 6.

Agenda item 14 (*continued*)

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Draft resolution (A/67/L.75)

The Acting President: Members will recall that the Assembly considered agenda item 14, jointly with agenda item 9, entitled "Report of the Economic and Social Council", at its 28th plenary meeting, on 22 October 2012.

Members will also recall that, under agenda item 14, the Assembly adopted resolution 67/18 at

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its 43rd plenary meeting, on 28 November 2012, and resolution 67/250 at its 65th plenary meeting, on 21 February 2013, and marked the global launch of the International Year of Quinoa at its 64th plenary meeting, on 20 February 2013.

I now give the floor to the representative of Singapore to introduce draft resolution A/67/L.75.

Mr. Neo (Singapore): I have the privilege to introduce, under agenda item 14, draft resolution A/67/L.75, entitled "Sanitation for All", which designates 19 November as World Toilet Day in the context of "Sanitation for All".

I am sure that there will be laughter among the press and the public when it is reported that the United Nations is declaring a World Toilet Day, initiated by Singapore, no less. But the amusement at our expense is well worth it if, after putting a lid on their jokes, the world's media go on to report, and the general public goes on to learn, that 2.5 billion people still do not have proper sanitation, that 1.1 billion people still defecate in the open, and that ending open defecation will lead to a 35 per cent reduction in diarrhoea, which results in more than 750,000 deaths of children under 5 years of age every year — that is to say, in the three minutes it takes me to deliver this statement, four children under five years of age will die of diarrhoea.

The media and the public will learn that, without safe and private toilets, women and girls face the threat of violence when they go out of their homes to relieve themselves and that girls are reluctant to attend school if there are no proper toilet facilities. They will also learn that every dollar spent on sanitation brings $5.50 in return by keeping people healthy and productive, that poor sanitation costs countries 0.5 to 7 per cent of their gross domestic product, and that the economic gains globally from investing in sanitation amount to about $260 billion per year.

Their laughter is therefore welcome, especially if they recognize the prevailing and unhealthy taboo that prevents an open and serious discussion of the problems of sanitation and toilets globally. We first need to seize the world's attention, through humour and a catchy phrase like World Toilet Day, before we can inform and educate.

Small States like Singapore know that if you want to change the world today, instead of many years or decades later, you have to start small. You have to find a pivotal issue, such as toilets, by focusing all your attention and efforts on which you can achieve many disproportionate and positive outcomes in terms of health, gender equality, economic prosperity and the personal dignity of millions of the world's poorest people. In that regard, we see toilets as the gateway to the broader challenge of sanitation in all its upstream and downstream aspects. That is why the draft resolution encourages all Member States and stakeholders to approach the sanitation issue in a much broader context and to encompass all its aspects. That is also in line with the Secretary-General's appeal to Member States to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, as well as the Deputy Secretary-General's recent Call to Action on Sanitation.

I would like to take a moment to explain how Singapore became involved with toilets and sanitation. It was largely due to a Singaporean social entrepreneur, Mr. Jack Sim, the founder of the World Toilet Organization. In 2001, Mr. Sim, also proudly know as "Mr. Toilet", established the World Toilet Organization to provide a global network for toilet associations and others involved in the toilet and sanitation sector. It now has 534 members from 86 countries. At the non-governmental level, World Toilet Day is already celebrated in many countries.

Conceptually, Mr. Sim's solutions to the toilet problem appeal to us. Among other things, he pioneered the "SaniShop", a self-sustaining, market-based initiative that empowers local communities to build and sell single-pit latrines to their community members. It is that kind of sustainable, market-based and bottom-of-the-pyramid approach to solving global development challenges that Singapore is happy to advocate at the intergovernmental level.

Through the simple draft resolution before the General Assembly today, we will have an international platform to shine a spotlight, collaborate on special events and develop further synergies on the issues of toilets and sanitation. We hope that the initiative to commemorate World Toilet Day in the context of "Sanitation for All" on 19 November will be taken up at the local, national, regional and international levels by all stakeholders in a manner appropriate to their priorities, needs and particular circumstances.

I would like to thank all Member States for their constructive participation and support during the open and transparent consultations. Their many proposals, suggestions and interventions made the draft resolution more robust and helped to accommodate the interests

of different participants. We are deeply grateful to the 120 sponsors of the draft resolution, many of whom signed on early, trusting in Singapore's stewardship of the negotiations. The cross-regional sponsorship underscores the universal recognition of the need to act on the pressing global challenge of toilets and sanitation. In that spirit, the sponsors respectfully call on all Member States to support the draft resolution.

Before I conclude, I would like to make an oral correction to paragraph 1 of draft resolution A/67/L.75, which should read as "Decides to designate 19 November as World Toilet Day in the context of Sanitation for All". I would like to reassure Member States that that is simply a return to the exact phrasing that was agreed upon during the negotiations on the draft resolution. I apologize for the error made in the production of the document. I also apologize for the errors in the translations of the draft resolution. We are working with the Secretariat to correct them.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/67/L.75, entitled "Sanitation for All", as orally corrected.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Saijin Zhang (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution, in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have also become sponsors of draft resolution A/67/L.75: Barbados, Belgium, Bhutan, Brazil, Bulgaria, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Guyana, Iceland, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kazakhstan, Marshall Islands, Mexico, the Federated States of Micronesia, Nicaragua, Norway, Pakistan, Senegal, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Viet Nam and Yemen.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/67/L.75, as orally corrected?

Draft resolution A/67/L.75, as orally corrected, was adopted (resolution 67/291).

The Acting President: Before giving the floor to the speaker in explanation of position, may I remind delegations that explanations are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Ms. Kim (United States of America): The United States is pleased to join today's consensus on the resolution on World Toilet Day in the context of "Sanitation for All" (resolution 67/291). We would like to thank Singapore in particular for sponsoring the resolution and contributing to better awareness and action.

Water is fundamental to the world's development goals, including health, economic growth, food security, gender equality and conflict mitigation.

We recognize that inadequate and improper sanitation undermines public health, contributes to the spread of preventable diseases and leaves marginalized populations more vulnerable. The United States strongly supports the goal of universal access to safe drinking water and sanitation.

As we have said before, Governments should seek to expand access, especially for underserved populations. Governments should develop and implement national policies and strategies where needed and commit sufficient resources so that they will be able to advance towards that goal as quickly as possible.

We read the resolution's references to the right to safe drinking water and sanitation in accordance with our 20 September 2010 statement at the Human Rights Council in Geneva and our 27 July 2011 statement in New York before the General Assembly.

The United States hopes that this resolution will also lead Governments to take concrete action to reduce the number of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation, and we again thank Singapore for its leadership on this issue.

The Acting President: We have heard the only speaker in explanation of position.

I now give the floor to the representative of Brunei Darussalam.

Mr. Ismail (Brunei Darussalam): I have the honour to make some brief remarks on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

ASEAN is committed to enhancing the well-being and livelihood of its peoples, and therefore welcomes the adoption of resolution 67/291. Its adoption by consensus, as well as the large number of sponsors it enjoys, underscores both the widespread recognition that the lack of sanitation is a major concern for the

global community and the importance of providing access to basic sanitation services.

Accordingly, it is timely for the United Nations to designate 19 November as World Toilet Day in the context of "Sanitation for All". We hope that World Toilet Day will contribute to promoting even greater awareness of the need for clean water and sanitation and to accelerating progress on the sanitation target contained in the Millennium Development Goals. By observing this international day, the global community can focus its efforts on hygiene promotion, the provision of basic sanitation services, sewerage and wastewater treatment and redouble efforts to improve the plight of the 2.5 billion people in developing countries who still lack access to improved sanitation facilities.

ASEAN is committed to ensuring that its cities and urban areas are environmentally sustainable, while meeting the social and economic needs of its peoples. That includes intensifying individual and collective efforts to improve the availability and quality of sanitation within ASEAN, as well as sharing experiences, expertise and technology on waste and water management. While recognizing that clean water, hygiene, sanitation and waste management have implications for infectious diseases, ASEAN continues to emphasize the need to strengthen regional capacities to monitor and address the potential of the spread of communicable and infectious diseases in the world.

In that regard, we appreciate the ongoing work of the United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations to provide basic sanitation to millions around the world. We hope that the sanitation gap will be narrowed in order to realize the goals of the campaign "Sustainable Sanitation: the five-year drive to 2015".

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Tajikistan.

Mr. Aslov (Tajikistan): Allow me to deliver this statement on behalf of Finland, Hungary, Thailand and Tajikistan, the four countries of the Steering Committee of the Group of Friends of Water.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Permanent Mission of Singapore for introducing the topical resolution on "Sanitation for All" (resolution 67/291). The question at hand is very important. As the *Millennium Development Goals Report 2013* shows, accelerated progress and bolder action are needed in the area of sanitation. The question is even more timely given the ongoing discussions on the sustainable development goals and the post-2015 development agenda. The Steering Committee hopes that the issue of water, with its many aspects, will be given the priority and importance it deserves in the future development agenda.

The Steering Committee of the Group of Friends of Water has organized a number of side events in preparation for and as a follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. Throughout those discussions, some messages were clear: access to safe drinking water and to sanitation are inseparable; access to safe drinking water and sanitation is a human right; and integrated and efficient water management and sanitation is a catalyst for a more sustainable economy.

We must work to end the practice of open defecation worldwide. If water is life, then sanitation is dignity. In many countries, the costs of inadequate sanitation for public health and national economies account for several percentage points of loss of gross domestic product. Investments in sanitation and hygiene bring returns in the areas of health, productivity, education, jobs and tourism. Civil society and the private sector are important partners in the promotion of smart and pro-poor solutions.

The water agenda needs to be broad and go beyond the Millennium Development Goals. Not only do we need to secure water, sanitation and hygiene for everyone, but we also need to address questions on water resource management, water quality, wastewater, resource efficiency, disaster risk reduction and preparedness for water-related disasters, and the protection of water resources and water-related ecosystems.

The countries members of the Steering Committee are organizing international events in order to discuss water and sanitation matters. The second Asia-Pacific Water Summit was held in Chiang Mai, Thailand, on 19 and 20 May this year; the High-level International Conference on Water Cooperation will be held on 22 August, in Dushanbe; and the Budapest Water Summit will be held in Budapest from 8 to 11 October. We will be sharing their outcomes with Member States.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Poulsen (European Union): The European Union and its member States would like to reaffirm their commitment to the global comprehensive agenda

on water and sanitation priority, in particular in our development cooperation. Indeed, water and sanitation are at the core of the three dimensions of sustainable development and therefore a crucial issue to tackle in order to achieve sustainable development as well as poverty eradication in a comprehensive manner.

This agenda is complex and has many dimensions, all of them equally important, from access to safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene for all, which is required for providing basic living standards and well-being, to the sustainable management of our water resources, which is also a driver for inclusive and sustainable growth.

Another element that we consider important for the overarching framework for post-2015 is equity, equality and justice. The European Union and its member States would also like to reiterate their position concerning the proclamation of international days, years and decades, which must be consistent with the international guidelines we have collectively agreed in Economic and Social Council resolution 1980/67 and reaffirmed twice in General Assembly resolutions 53/199 and 61/185.

While we will join the consensus today, we will continue to actively defend and respect the Economic and Social Council guidelines on future proclamations and give priority to the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the work of the General Assembly, in support of its revitalization.

Finally, as noted by the representative of Singapore, the text that we have adopted today needs to be corrected to fully reflect the text agreed in the negotiations. We also trust that all versions in other languages will also be brought into line with the corrected English text.

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 14.

Agenda item 120

Multilingualism

Report of the Secretary-General (A/67/311)

Draft resolution (A/67/L.74)

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Senegal to introduce draft resolution A/67/L.74.

Mr. Diallo (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/67/L.74, on multilingualism. Introduced for the first time in 1995, the resolution on multilingualism was originally launched at the initiative of the group of francophone countries before gradually becoming the concern of a majority of delegations regardless of their linguistic or regional group. Reviewed every two years, the draft resolution reaches completion after a six-month process that has gradually enabled multilingualism to be strengthened within the Organization.

(*spoke in English*)

I would like to commend the hard work and commitment of all the delegations involved in the negotiations, working in a very positive spirit of openness and flexibility, and to express my sincere appreciation to those who agreed to sponsor the text we have before us today. I would also like to acknowledge the role of the Coordinator for Multilingualism, as well as the collaboration and decisive contribution to the process of the Secretariat, through the Department of Public Information and the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management.

(*spoke in French*)

The United Nations was created in response to the need to ensure lasting peace, brotherhood and cooperation. In order to achieve that goal, equality among Members was established as a fundamental principle, and multilingualism naturally emerged as an essential factor in the implementation of that principle. Based on the 2012 report of the Secretary-General on multilingualism (A/67/311) and, to a certain extent, on the work of the Committee on Information, this year the draft resolution has made some genuine progress.

Regarding its form, we note and welcome its division into paragraphs following clearly identified chapter heads that display to perfection the diverse aspects covered. That diversity is very much related to a concern for complementarity, because the draft resolution, depending on the case, reaffirms, strengthens or complements the provisions for the various areas of the work of the United Nations, including information centres, conference services and the documentation and management of human resources and language service staff training.

In its essence, the draft resolution emphasizes the fundamentals — parity between the six official languages and the importance of equitable treatment in order to guarantee that all Member States can express themselves and ensure that their views are promoted

in a language that suits them. Among other essential elements, it also stresses the importance of respecting the timely distribution of official United Nations documents in the six official languages, as well as the crucial role of multilingual communication through the United Nations information centres and within its peacekeeping operations.

The importance of parity is reaffirmed in taking into consideration the evolution of the means of communication that the United Nations makes available, particularly Internet sites and social networks. In that regard, the text of the draft resolution requests that the Secretary-General assess its implementation thoroughly in his next report on multilingualism, for non-official languages as well as the official ones. In this way the draft resolution takes note of the efforts that the Organization is making with regard to other languages, in accordance with its concern for facilitating information-sharing with local populations and adapting to the evolution of the multilateral context.

(*spoke in Spanish*)

Another point that should be emphasized and that is highlighted in the text is the celebration of language days. With that initiative, adopted in 2010, the United Nations symbolically dedicates one day to each of the six official languages in order to raise the international community's awareness of their history, culture and use and, in so doing, to promote multilingualism and cultural diversity. Thus, the French language is celebrated on 20 March, International Francophonie Day; Chinese is celebrated on 19 April; English on 23 April, William Shakespeare's birthday; Russian on 6 June, the day on which the anniversary of the birth of the great Russian poet Alexander Pushkin is commemorated; Spanish on 12 October, the customary day for celebrating Hispanic traditions; and Arabic on 8 December, the date in 1973 on which the General Assembly designated Arabic the sixth official language (see resolution 3191 (XXVIII)). While welcoming the celebration of these days, the draft resolution also attaches importance to the role of associations and of cooperation with other international organizations, institutions and Member States in achieving the goals that have been set.

(*spoke in French*)

The draft resolution also encourages the Secretary-General to make further efforts, with the agreement of the heads of the Secretariat, to achieve a coherent approach system-wide, with reference to the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on multilingualism in United Nations entities, contained in document JIU/REP/2011/4, which noted the absence of a road map for multilingualism at the system-wide level. In addition, on issues of human resources the text continues to encourage multilingual diversity in recruitment and the importance of ensuring continuing training of staff in the official languages.

(*spoke in English*)

In the area of language services, during the negotiations, delegations did not fail to express concern about the working conditions of the interpreters and translators in the Albano building. They are indeed essential to the functioning of multilingualism, and I commend their hard work. However, given the constructive dialogue that has been initiated between the language staff and the Department of Management, for the time being the delegations have agreed not to include recommendations on the issue in the draft resolution, in hopes that sustainable solutions for improving the working conditions will be found.

(*spoke in French*)

If I had to sum up its content, I would say that draft resolution A/67/L.74 reaffirms the principles of multilingualism at the United Nations, commends the progress achieved, indicates the challenges to be met and encourages the efforts that must be made to address them. Multilingualism cannot be effective without the contribution of every partner. The Secretariat, Member States, institutions and entities, all of us have a responsibility we must take, and I remain convinced that today the General Assembly will confirm its commitment by adopting by consensus, as is its tradition, the text that I have the honour to submit for its consideration.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/67/L.74, entitled "Multilingualism".

I now give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Zhang Saijin (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution and in addition to those delegations listed on the draft document, the following countries have become sponsors of A/67/L.74: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burundi, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, Croatia, Greece, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras,

Hungary, India, Kazakhstan, Libya, Madagascar, Mauritania, Montenegro, the Republic of Moldova, Rwanda, Serbia, Seychelles, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Uruguay, Vanuatu and Viet Nam.

The Acting President: May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/67/L.74?

Draft resolution A/67/L.74 was adopted (resolution 67/292).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 120?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 63 (*continued*)

New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support

(b) Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa

Draft resolution (A/67/L.59/Rev.1)

The Acting President: Members will recall that the General Assembly considered, in a joint debate, agenda item 63 and its sub-items (a) and (b) and agenda item 13, at its 25th, 26th and 28th plenary meetings, on 17 and 22 October 2012.

I now give the floor to the representative of Fiji to introduce draft resolution A/67/L.59/Rev.1.

Mr. Navoti (Fiji): I have the honour to introduce, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the draft resolution on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa, as contained in document A/67/L.59/Rev.1, under sub-item (b) of agenda item 63. The Group of 77 and China would like to thank all delegations for their constructive contribution to this draft resolution. The Group also conveys its appreciation to member States that have sponsored the draft.

At the outset, we commend the African countries, the African Union and subregional organizations on the progress they continue to make in conflict prevention and resolution, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and development. While recognizing that the primary responsibility for peace, security and development in Africa lies with the African countries, we stress the need for support from the United Nations system and partners in order to harness Africa's vast opportunities and effectively address its challenges with a view to making further progress towards the goals of a conflict-free Africa and achieving sustainable development. In that regard, particular attention needs to be paid to addressing the challenges of eradicating poverty and unemployment, especially among the youth.

We welcome African-led initiatives to strengthen political, economic and cooperative Governments, such as the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance and the African Peer Review Mechanism. We call upon the United Nations system and Member States to assist African countries and regional and subregional organizations, upon their request, in their ongoing efforts to promote constitutional order and the rule of law, enhance good governance, continue to fight against impunity and in the holding of free, fair, inclusive and transparent elections.

We further call on the United Nations system to invite Member States to assist African countries emerging from conflict, upon their request, as appropriate, in their efforts to build national capacities, including through national security sector reform strategies, the delivery of basic public services, providing for the safe return of internally displaced persons and refugees, and the launching of income-generating activities, particularly for young people and women.

We recognize the need for African countries to make continued efforts to create an enabling environments for inclusive and sustained economic growth and development, and for the international community to continue efforts to increase the flow of new and additional resources for financing for development from all sources — public and private, domestic and foreign — to support the development efforts of African countries.

Finally, we call upon the United Nations system and Member States and bilateral and multilateral partners to deliver expeditiously on their commitment to ensure the full and speedy implementation of the provisions of the Political Declaration on Africa's development needs.

I have been informed that there is a need for an oral correction on the draft as submitted. In that respect, I call attention to paragraph 24 of the draft resolution, as contained in document A/67/L.59/Rev.1. In the second line of that paragraph, the comma appearing after the

word "request" should be removed so that phrase reads "upon the request as appropriate".

On that note, the Group of 77 and China look forward to the adoption of the draft resolution, as orally corrected, by consensus.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take action on draft resolution A/67/L.59/Rev.1, entitled "Implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa", as orally corrected.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Zhang Saijin (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I would like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution and in addition to the sponsors listed on the draft document, the following countries have become sponsors of A/67/L.59/Rev.1: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the United States of America.

The Acting President: May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/67/L.59/Rev.1, as orally corrected?

Draft resolution A/67/L.59/Rev.1, as orally corrected, was adopted (resolution 67/293).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 63?

It was so decided.

Programme of work

The Acting President: I should like to inform members that the consideration of draft resolution A/67/L.57/Rev.1, submitted under sub-item (a) of agenda item 63, entitled "New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support", is postponed for one week in order to allow for some further consultations to be conducted on the proposal.

The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.